

Amiga's dumbest criminals

Written by dreamkatcha. Any related videos, as always, can be found on my YouTube channel.

None of this would have been possible without the fantastic resources generously provided by immensely talented emulator authors, and communities such as Hall of Light, Lemon Amiga, Lemon 64, World of Spectrum, Moby Games, World of Longplays and Recorded Amiga Games. Thank you for your tireless dedication to preserving the history of gaming.

It being the season of goodwill, and strobing, pimped-up conifers are beginning to appear before blazing hearths across the globe, I was reading the Christmas 1993 edition of Amiga Format, when I came across an interesting article concerning that evergreen video game nasty, software piracy.

It approaches the issue from all conceivable angles; how it will impact the Amiga's future (if it even *has* one), what FAST (Federation Against Software Theft), ELSPA (European Leisure Software Publisher's Association) and the police (blokes and blokesses in blue who arrest you if you're up to no good) are doing to combat it. It also invites pivotal members of the software industry such as Martyn Brown, Dino Dini and Peter Molyneux to grab the mic and take to the stage to air their damning verdict.

Where it gets really wacky is the space given up to a "*real life pirate*" (gasp!) who most likely was recovering from a brain haemorrhage when he agreed to have his picture taken for

the magazine, engage in an interview and provide details of where he lives and how he advertises his wares.



Ladies and gentlemen... a real life pirate!

In the course of our investigations for this feature we came across a dot-matrix printout that included a comprehensive list of Amiga games for sale for £2.50 for the first disk, and £1 for subsequent ones. We contacted the seller, who turned out to be an affable and intelligent man in his early twenties. He agreed to the following interview...

Picture caption: This software pirate makes a living from what he does. He has no interest in computers, let alone the Amiga, so if the market dies, he'll move on to another machine.

AF: How long have you been involved with software piracy?

About three months now.

AF: How did you get involved?

A mate of mine, he's a real entrepreneur, said to me that he could get the games, and did I want to sell them. I look after my sick father. I'd just finished my degree, and my mate knew I needed to make some extra money. He knew someone in one of the large piracy organisations, and they'd stopped dealing in software, so he got me all the letters and I replied to them.

AF: So did you have, or do you now have, any interest in computer games?

I'm not very interested in computer games at all, I used to be. I had a Spectrum, C64 and an Amiga. But my interest sort of died.

AF: How do you get the software?

My mate, he's got a modem, he downloads the games.



AF: Does it ever strike you that piracy is wrong at all?

Yes, I consider myself very honest. I know piracy is wrong, but if I wasn't doing it, someone else would be in my place. I've got to make my money somewhere, I can't get a job. I'd rather not do it, I don't make a lot of money out of it. I deliberately don't make a lot of money out of it. I don't want FAST on me. I don't think FAST are going to touch me, they've got plenty of other people to do.

AF: So you don't have your own modem at home?

No. I don't have any gear at my house. I have a PO box, but that's registered at someone else's house, and the Amiga isn't there.

AF: These precautions are for fear of prosecution?

Not prosecution, no. You see in Scotland (where this man is from) the Prosecutor Fiscal has declared that it isn't in the public interest to prosecute software pirates. But the police can come round and confiscate all your gear.

AF: How do go about getting your custom?

I advertise in the local paper. We're advertising on cracked games now as well.

AF: Aren't you concerned that piracy will kill the games industry? In the end it will result in you having nothing to sell.

In my experience, pirates really don't care. There's always something else to copy. Cartridge piracy is increasing. Compact Disc copiers are only a few thousand

pounds. No one cares whether it's the Amiga or any other machine.



I don't suppose we'll ever know if piracy would have killed the Amiga since Commodore beat them to the punch, committing corporate hara-kiri long before it ran its natural course. What we *do* know is that Captain Pugwash here went on to win a Darwin award and shortly after expired having misinterpreted the toxic materials label on a bottle of bleach.

You can rejoice in the hazy glow of festive spirit in its entirety by flicking to pages 43-46 of issue 54. Happy holidays!